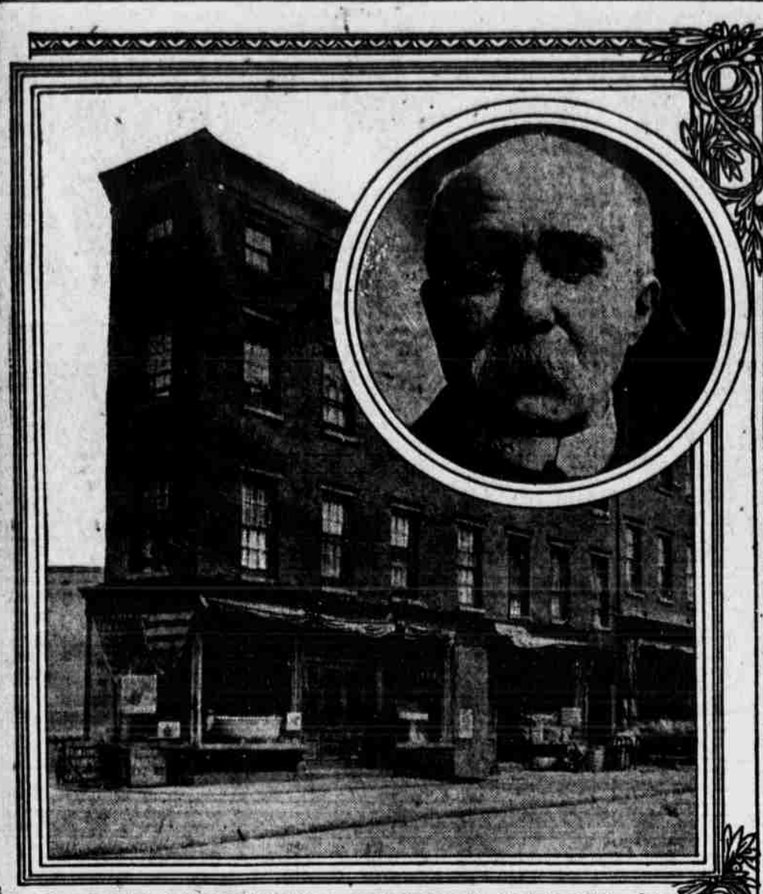
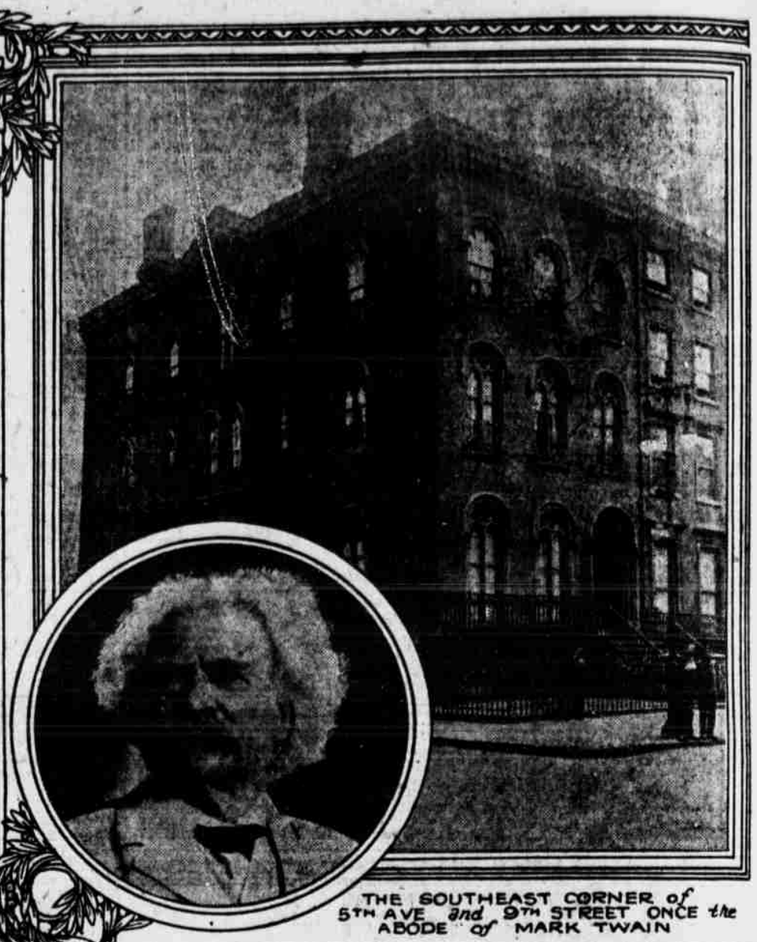
Old Residences That Stand as New York's Fanes of the Great

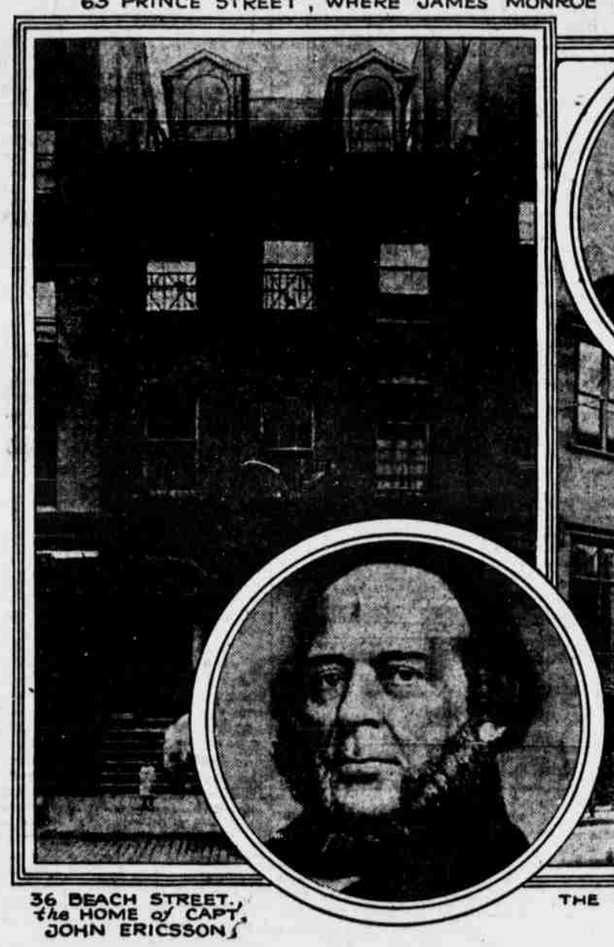


GEORGES CLEMENCEAU PRACTISED MEDICINE for SEVERAL YEARS at 212 WEST 12TH STREET

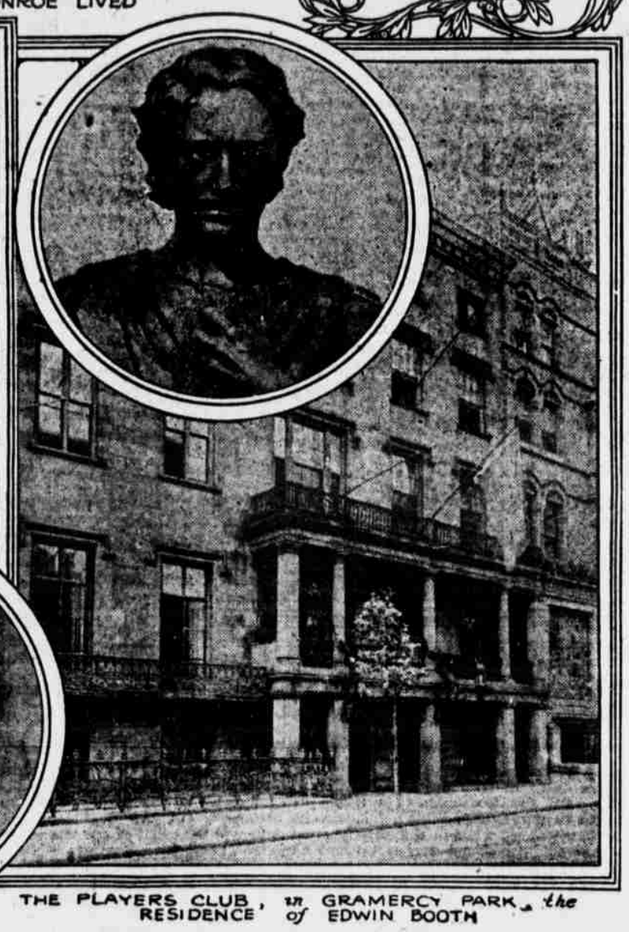
63 PRINCE STREET, WHERE JAMES MONROE LIVED



THE SOUTHEAST CORNER of 5TH AVE and 9TH STREET ONCE the ABODE of MARK TWAIN



36 BEACH STREET, the HOME of CAPT. JOHN ERICSSON



THE PLAYERS CLUB, in GRAMERCY PARK, the RESIDENCE of EDWIN BOOTH

Abodes of Presidents, Members of Royalty and Others Known to Fame Abound in Manhattan.

By JOHN W. HARRINGTON.

SEATS of the mighty are everywhere in this city of New York. With many of them, especially the entableted houses in the lower part of Manhattan Island, where the patriotic societies have been busy in their tasks of remembrance, most of us are on sightseeing terms. When the proposal comes, as it often does these days, to restore the tottering house in which some President of the United States once dwelt or to rebuild the walls where first were heard the cries of a child who became one of the world's great, we realize that about us are scores of fanes which might be dedicated to men and women whose names have been sounded by the trump of fame.

We know, of course, that down in the long room of Fraunces's Tavern Washington bade farewell to the officers of the Continental Army. We may find our way to Golden Hill Tavern, or look for the fence which once entirely surrounded Bowling Green and the leaden statue of King George. Down at the edge of the gray sea wall of the Battery stands the sturdy figure of Capt. John Ericsson, the designer of the Monitor, who wrought a revolution in naval architecture. Suppose we take a jaunt to the north to the old home of the Swedish genius and to other spots, most of them off the beaten paths, where dwelt men who in their day and generation won place and distinction.

Through a maze of truck crowded streets we fare to 36 Beach street, a four story mansion of the kind which once lined St. John's Park. The breathing place in the midst of what is now a mass of warehouses was formerly a haven for those who loved the green sward and stately trees. No. 36 was a symbol of success. When John Ericsson won what was considered a fortune by his invention he purchased in 1864 the fine old house in Beach street. Many traces of its beauty remain, although its front is half hidden by the unsightly fire escapes that mark it as a tenement. The old fanlight over the carved doorway has been broken by young vandals; the wrought iron railings and newels have long since rusted into dilapidation, and the stone steps have been worn down by the thousands of thick soled shoes which have passed over them.

A $20,000 Mansion.

John Ericsson paid $20,000 for this house when it was new, and the records show that he expended $1,700 for altering it and $2,800 for the furniture. Tradition has it that some of the ornaments of the house were hammered out or carved by his own hands.

The roof of number 36 is peaked. Its pitch is so precipitous that any one losing his foothold upon it would not be likely to regain it. On the tip of the house Ericsson caused a platform to be built on which he erected an observatory and workroom. There is a story, which, however, is not true, that Ericsson designed the Monitor on this lofty height. He did, however, conduct here some important experiments with sun motors and heat engines.

As Ericsson had a fortune of about a quarter of a million dollars, he was able to maintain this house in a style appropriate to his furnishings and to the then fashionable neighborhood in which it was situated. Even when the huge freight depot blotted out the loveliness of St. John's Park forever the inventor continued to live in this home, to which he had become much attached. He was irritable in his later years, and strange sounds such as those made by persons who think they are musicians greatly disturbed him. He induced his next door neighbor, whose daughter had a penchant for playing "The Happy Farmer," to permit him at his own expense to pad the walls of her practice room with four inch mattresses. He entered into a yearly contract also with another resident of the neighborhood that for a consideration of $5 a year "the party of the second part" was not to keep a dog.

There is no tablet upon this building in memory of its distinguished occupant, who in 1889 passed from this life. Several efforts have been made to have one placed on the outer wall, but the owner never approved of this sentimentality. Four families live in the house, and the basement, which is boarded up, is used as a coal cellar.

Still fewer traces of its former grandeur than those which remain in the home of Ericsson are to be seen at 63 Prince street, where James Monroe, once Chief Magistrate of this country, lived in most moderate circumstances in his declining years and where he died. The building is now used as a carpenter shop, and the apertures which once were windows are devoid of glass. A wretched tumble down place it is which mocks the splendid tablet of bronze secured to its mouldering outer walls. This is the inscription thereof:

In this house died
JAMES MONROE
Fifth President of the United States
Who proclaimed
The Monroe Doctrine
Upon which depends the
Freedom of American Republics
And the Safety of the United States
Against Foreign Aggression
Born April 28, 1758. Died July 4, 1831
Soldier in the Continental Army
Member of the Continental Congress
American Envoy to Great Britain,
France and Spain
Secretary of War
Twice Governor of Virginia
Twice President of the United States
This tablet erected by the Woman's
Auxiliary of the American Scenic
and Preservation Society, April
26, 1905.

Mr. Monroe made his home in his declining years with his son-in-law, Samuel L. Gouverneur, whom he had appointed Postmaster of New York. His Virginia home, Oak Hill, had passed before his death to Col. John W. Fairfax, who had willed it to a son.

Buchanan's Home.

James Buchanan, another President of the United States, lived for many years at 180 Second avenue. This part of the city corresponded at one time to upper Fifth avenue, and was filled with homes of men and women of social prominence and of intellectual achievements.

At 142 East Eighteenth street resided Bayard Taylor.

There stands at the southwest corner of Irving place and Seventeenth street a squat little structure, overshadowed by the high school building opposite, which bears his name, the city home of Washington Irving. For many years there dwelt there two noted bachelor maids, Misses Elisabeth Marbury and Elsie de Wolfe. From time to time there have been projects for maintaining the house as a permanent memorial to the author of the "Knickerbocker History of New York." As yet, however, the house has not even been marked so that the passerby may know its history.

Gramercy Park, a little to the northeast, is a secluded spot in and about which have lived many of the great men of this earth.

Here is the Players Club, once the home of Edwin Booth, the actor, whose statue stands in the midst of the fenced park beyond.

Samuel J. Tilden, statesman and sage, who by so narrow a margin missed being a President of the United States, abode for many years in the double mansion at 14 and 15, where is now domiciled the National Arts Club. There he kept the many thousand volumes of his library which were removed to the New York Public Library, of which they are a part as the Tilden Foundation. Sculptured on the walls of this stately dwelling we may see the busts of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Goethe and of Dante.

Veering slightly to the westward, we reach 28 East Twentieth street, the birthplace of Col. Theodore Roosevelt, twenty-sixth President of the United States. A two story commercial building, the lower part of which is occupied by a cloth merchant, now stands in the stead of the brownstone dwelling in which Col. Roosevelt's family lived. The old home of the Roosevelts in the city was much like that of the John E. Roosevelt branch of the family, at 26, adjoining, which still remains, and is now used as a restaurant. Its facade is almost unrecognizable, however, because of the show windows which have been added. It is proposed now to build on the land on which No. 28 stands a copy of the house in which the distinguished American statesman first saw the light. The John E. Roosevelt residence, which closely resembles the one that stood at 28 in its architecture, would be restored if this project is fulfilled.

Washington Square and lower Fifth avenue have many footprints of many noted figures in the history of the country.

The late Daniel E. Sickles, hero of Gettysburg and a figure in the political history of the State, made his home for forty years at 23 Fifth avenue. In his old age he sat among the relics of his campaigns and objects gathered in foreign lands and drew deeply from the font of memory. A choleric person he was, scenting the controversy from afar, just as the old war horse feels his nostrils dilate when the battle is nigh. His cronies used to group about him and review the scenes of the civil war and fight over again the conflicts which had thrilled them in their youth. As his family was not with him, he leased the various floors of the old house as apartments to the aspiring intellectuals of Greenwich Village and reserved the lower floor for himself and his treasures of the past.

Only a block or so away, at the southeast corner of Fifth avenue and Ninth street, is a quaint house with Gothic trimmings and mullioned windows where smoked and wrote for many a year Samuel L. Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. Often he could be seen coming out of the dim portals of an evening clad in his famous white broadcloth evening suit and puffing one of those cigars which he said he negotiated at the rate of $3.50 a barrel. Some of his best work, that of the later period which is filled with delicate sentiment and a charming idealism, was written in this Fifth avenue residence, of which he was the tenant until he moved to the country home which he had built for himself in Connecticut.

The spirit of old New York rests upon West Twelfth street, with its sedate and prim houses, which seem to drowse through the long summer afternoons. And yet in Twelfth street have been housed men of action and of force who have made their mark upon the history of the world. Major-Gen. Winfield Scott had as his city home 24 West Twelfth street. He purchased it in 1853, several years before the country hailed him as the conqueror of Mexico. An officer who lived up to the finest traditions of the military profession, the General was a notable figure in the social life of the metropolis. He entertained lavishly in the spacious dwelling in Twelfth street and was deeply attached to that section of the city. The house was sold many years ago and is now known as the Rosemary Home, which was founded for the benefit of young business women. The long parlor on the first floor is now a dining room. No tablet distinguishes the place where the courtly warrior dwelt, yet there is a suggestion of the days long passed in the motto on the wall recording that "Rosemary is for remembrance."

Where Clemenceau Lived.

From Versailles, where statesmen foregather about the table of green baize, it is a far cry to somnolent Twelfth street, and yet many a time the "Tiger of France" trod its flagged pavements. Georges Clemenceau, that commanding figure in the Peace Conference, lived for several years at No. 212, where he made a determined though unsuccessful effort to gain a livelihood by practising medicine. He spent more of his time in tutoring or in reading in the New York Public Library, then in Astor place, than he did in ministering to patients. The odd looking slice of a house in which he had his office remains to this day much the same as it was when he lived there. From Twelfth street he went to Stamford, Conn., where he taught in a young women's seminary, and after several terms returned to France to resume his remarkable and brilliant career which had been interrupted by exile and adversity.

Tony Sarg's Marionettes dangle at their strings in what was once the parlor of the house of Daniel Drew, American financier, who lived for many years at 5 West Sixteenth street. The building is now filled with artists' studios or the rooms of persons who contribute to what in this day is sometimes called "literature."

William Cullen Bryant, poet and journalist, the author of "Thanatopsis," made his home across the street at No. 24.

That romantic character in the world of drama, Edwin Forrest, had as the setting for his picturesque personality 436 West Twenty-second street. The ornate, double house with its dignified and beautiful entrance remains to this day just as it was when the great actor was its tenant. Here many receptions were held, and Mr. and Mrs. Forrest had there what was in effect a salon visited by the brilliant men and women of the literary and social circles of the day.

Royalty often comes to these shores, lives in seclusion and goes back to its own. On the upper end of Manhattan Island, not far from Grant's Tomb, stands a public restaurant, the Claremont, which as a house was the residence of Joseph Bonaparte, brother of the first Emperor of the French. The structure was built originally by Michael Hogan of the British Consular Service, who gave it the same name as that by which was designated the Surrey country seat of the Duke of Clarence, afterward King William the Fourth of England. Hogan and the Duke had been boys together at school and such close friends that the English scion once visited the friend of his youth, who lived in that part of New York still known as Greenwich Village. The Duke of Clarence also went to Claremont to get a view of the magnificent Hudson River from the country place of the Hogans. Claremont was occupied by Joseph Bonaparte in 1815.

Where now are reared tall apartment houses were estates in the upper part of Manhattan to which went men of note to escape from the city of turmoil.

There still remains the Grange, where Alexander Hamilton found surcease from the perplexities of politics and finance to enjoy the simple life. Near the Grange, which is now situated at Convent avenue and 141st street, where it was moved from 143d street, were planted thirteen trees, said to have been set out by him to honor the original colonies. The house stands near St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church and is used as a community centre.

The Jumel Mansion.

Gen. George Washington, the masterly and efficient leader of the forces of the American Revolution, is always associated with the white pillared house at Edgecombe avenue and 160th street known as the Jumel Mansion. The sale of the James Gordon Bennett property, which includes the battlefield where redcoat and Continental strove for the mastery of New York city, recalls these eventful days when Washington used this structure as the headquarters for his ragged army. The house had been built originally by Lieut.-Col. Roger Morris, who had been Washington's friend and companion in arms in the French and Indian wars.

They had both served under Gen. Braddock. By a strange turn of fate, Washington found himself in possession of the home of his old comrade who had become his enemy. The parlors of the mansion served as the point from which orders were issued by the leader of the Revolutionary forces. When Fort Washington fell and Washington had to withdraw, many of the American prisoners were brought back to the Rogers estate and detained in its barns until they could be transferred to jails and hulks.

The purchase of the house in 1810 by Stephen Jumel, the wine merchant, gave it another name and brought to the fore his vivacious wife, Mme. Betty Jumel, who when far past the meridian of life was wedded to Aaron Burr.

Sacred ground indeed is upper Manhattan on account of its many memories of the men who fought for American liberty. Not far from these places, however, is a small wooden cottage which, as long as it stands, will be regarded as a shrine of American literature and American ideals. Within it that strange genius, Edgar Allan Poe, beset by want, penned immortal poems. He lived there from 1846 to 1849 and there among other works he composed "Annabel Lee" and "Ulalume." It was in this cottage that his invalid wife, Virginia, passed from earth.

The home has been moved from its original site, a few hundred yards distant, to Poe Park, where it may be visited by the public who wish to come into communion with the soul of one of the world's most gifted poets.

These are only a few of the spots in the city of New York which are associated with the names of men and women of international fame. We have only to look about us to behold their monuments.

The Mechanical Adaptations of Animals

EVERY one of the higher animals is in some way mechanically adapted to its mode of life and surroundings, a horse or an antelope being from one point of view a living galloping or trotting machine. Putting such examples aside, there are numerous cases of more peculiar adaptations to which attention may be confined.

For example, the climbing creatures. It may be noted that a number of species, such as Old World monkeys and squirrels, present special modifications for a life in the trees, the essential being that they should have the power of rotating the forearm on the upper portion of the limb and that their toes should be mobile and furnished with claws or nails.

There is one group of African rodents, designated scaly tailed squirrels, the members of which seem to have felt the necessity of additional aid for the purpose of tree climbing. They have accordingly developed on the under surface of the tail certain structures which may be compared to the climbing irons used by workmen. These take the form of a few transverse rows of large, triangular, horny scales, with their points directed backward. These scales, when pressed against the bark of a tree, must afford material aid in climbing.

The Anteaters' Climbing Scales.

Another group of animals in which "climbing irons" have been developed is that of the scaly anteaters, or pangolins, of India and Asia—creatures which look more like living fir cones than mammals. The scales—much larger than those of the scaly tailed squirrels—cover both surfaces of the body, as well as the head and limbs, so that it can scarcely be supposed they have been developed for climbing. Indeed, only a few species climb; but these have found the assistance afforded by the scales on the under side of value in an ascent, and habitually make use of them as climbing irons.

Quite a different type of climbing, or rather hanging, apparatus has been developed in the sloths of tropical America, which spend their time in the treetops, where they remain suspended back downward by their hook like claws. These claws, which may be three or two, have been modified from ordinary claws and afford a striking instance of adaptation to an abnormal mode of life. The thumb of bats is likewise modified into a hook-like claw—also used for suspending purposes when the creatures hang head upward. Generally, however, bats suspend themselves head downward by the hind claws, grasping power being retained by the toes, so that the modification has not been carried to the same extent as in sloths, in which the claws set in a mechanical manner.

Suction Plates on Bats.

Certain bats appear to have found their hook like thumbs and hind feet insufficient for suspension and have made use of the suction principle for this purpose. This mode of suspension has been developed independently in two distinct bats, one a native of Brazil and the other of Madagascar. In the Brazilian species the suckers take the form of stalked discs attached to the palms of the thumbs and the soles of the feet. The suckers of the Malagasy species are horseshoe like. By means of the suckers these bats are able to ascend vertical surfaces. Very curious it is to note the similarity between the suckers of these bats and those on the arms of the cuttlefishes.

The geckos which run up the walls and over the ceilings of houses in warm countries afford another instance of the sucker principle. Bats are not the only mammals which have availed themselves of the sucker. In the Malay Islands and the Philippines dwell large eyed and slender limbed little lemur-like creatures known as tarsiers, whose habits are nocturnal. In these weird little animals the tips of the toes are expanded into cushion-like discs, capable of acting as suckers, by means of which they ascend such smooth surfaces as the stems of bamboos.

Hoofed or ungulate animals, such as sheep, pigs, camels and elephants, have given up using their fore limbs in a handlike manner, and employ them solely for progression. Consequently tree climbing is out of their line. In Africa and Syria occur, however, certain representatives of the order known as rock rabbits, or hyrax, the Syrian species being the one referred to in the Bible as the coney (the old name of the rabbit). Certain African hyraxes have, however, taken to tree climbing, and the way they manage it is this: In each foot the sole is somewhat cup shaped, and by the aid of muscular action the centre can be more elevated, so that when the edges are applied to the bark the foot acts like a sucker.